

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 5184

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, UNSC, XJ, SF, RH

SUBJ: RHODESIA - STATUS AND NEAR-TERM PROSPECTS IN THE UN

1. A COMBINATION OF CURRENT TRENDS AND EVENTS CONCERNING RHODESIA NOW APPEARS TO BE MUTUALLY REINFORCING PRESSURES AT THE UNITED NATIONS TO ACT ON THAT ISSUE, PARTICULARLY IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL, AND PROBABLY WITHIN THE NEXT 4-6 WEEKS. THE PRESSURES ARE CLEARLY FOCUSED ON OIL SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA, EITHER RHODESIA-SPECIFIC OR NOT. COMMON SENSE AND GEOGRAPHY HAVE CONVINCED AFRICANS AND OTHERS THAT SMITH CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT OIL AND THAT OIL GETS TO HIM ONLY THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA. CAREFUL, CONVINCING RESEARCH AND EXPOSITION BY HASLEMERE RESEARCHER BERNARD RIVERS HAS PRESENTED A VERY CREDIBLE CASE THAT THE OIL FLOWS NORTH ONLY WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SUBSIDIARIES OF WESTERN OIL COMPANIES.

2. IN THE MINDS OF DELEGATIONS HERE, THE OIL WEAPON IS NOW CLEARLY DEFINED. THIS HAS BEEN CLEAR IN DELIBERATIONS OF THE SANCTIONS COMMITTEE AS WELLAS IN INFORMAL CORRIDOR CONVERSATIONS. IN DECEMBER THERE WILL BE NO LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES TO DEMAND ITS USE:

A) THE FOURTH COMMITTEE'S CURRENT DEBATE ON RHODESIA,
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SCHEDULED TO END AROUND DECEMBER 9 OR 12, SEEMS CERTAIN TO RESULT IN RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR EXPANSION OF SANCTIONS AGAINST RHODESIA. WHILE NON-BINDING, THE FOURTH COMMITTEE DEBATE AND SUBSEQUENT CONSIDERATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS IN PLENARY ARE CERTAIN TO FOCUS AFRICAN ATTENTION ON CURRENT EVENTS IN RHODESIA AND TO STIMULATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF "DOING SOMETHING" ABOUT THE SITUATION THAT WILL SPILL

OVER INTO THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

B) IN THE ABSENCE OF NEWS OF CONTINUING MOMENTUM, THE PERCEPTION AT THE UN THAT THE UK/US PLAN HAS FIZZLED IS SLOWLY GROWING. OUR ASSURANCES TO THE CONTRARY WILL MAINTAIN CREDIBILITY ONLY SO LONG. SYG WALDHEIM HAS AGREED TO POSTPONE HIS REPORT TO THE SC ON PREM CHAND'S MISSION- UNTIL AT LEAST DECEMBER 10. IF THERE IS NO SOLID PROGRESS TO REPORT THEN, WALDHEIM UNDOUBTEDLY WILL ATTEMPT FURTHER DELAY. BUT EVEN IF HE SUCCEEDS IN THIS EFFORT, THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO OTHER READY PRETEXTS FOR AN EARLY SC MEETING ON RHODESIA -- THE SANCTIONS COMMITTEE AND THE MOZAMBIQUE RAID.

C) THE SANCTIONS COMMITTEE'S INTERIM REPORT ON EXPANSION OF SANCTIONS AGAINST RHODESIA COULD BE TAKEN UP BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL AT ANY TIME, ESPECIALLY UNDER THE UNPREDICTABLE MAURITIAN SC PRESIDENCY FOR DECEMBER. WHILE THAT REPORT ONLY NOTES THAT THE COMMITTEE COULD REACH NO AGREEMENT ON THE TIMING FOR DISCUSSION OF SANCTIONS EXPANSION, A COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO DISCUSS IT WILL SURELY BE FOCUSED ON THE SANCTIONS EXPANSION OPTIONS ALREADY TABLED, PARTICULARLY THOSE DEALING WITH OIL.

D) THE RECENT RHODESIAN RAID INTO MOZAMBIQUE OFFERS A READY PRETEXT FOR A SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON RHODESIA, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHOSE BOTTOM LINE AGAIN WOULD PROBABLY BE OIL SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA, EITHER RHODESIA-SPECIFIC OR NOT. WHILE WE HAVE NOT HEARD MUCH DISCUSSION OF THIS MOST RECENT RAID FROM AFRICANS TO DATE, OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE COMPLAINT BROUGHT TO THE COUNCIL BY JOZAMBIQUE EARLIER THIS YEAR WAS THAT IT TOOK SOME TIME FOR FACTS TO BE GATHERED, PUBLIC INFORMATION TO BE DEVELOPED AND AFRICAN STRATEGIES FORMED. WE THEREFORE COULD RECEIVE A CALL FOR AN SC MEETING WITH THE NEXT WEEK OR TEN DAYS. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT, WITH INTIAL REPORTS INDICATING THE POSSIBILITY OF EVIDENCE OF DIRECT SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE RAID, THE AFRICANS WOULD NOT BE SATISFIED WITH A COUNCIL ACTION MERELY CONDEMNING THE RAID. THEY WILL SEEK SOME FURTHER ACTION, VERY LIKELY AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF, IN THE AREA OF EXPANDED SANCTIONS.

3. IN SHORT, WE BELIEVE THAT A SC MEETING ON RHODESSIA UNDER SOME PRETEXT IS HIGHLY LIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND THAT THE AFRICANS WILL USE IT TO ATTEMPT TO FORCE OIL SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA, EITHER SPECIFIC TO RHODESIA OR NOT. HOW WELL WE SURVIVE SUCH SESSIONS DEPENDS VERY MUCH ON HOW WELL THE UK/US EFFORT ON RHODESIAIS DOING AT THAT TIME. IF THERE IS NO PROGRESS AND, WORSE YET,

IF SMITH APPEARS TO BE PROCEEDING TOWARD AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT UNACCEPTABLE TO THE FRONT LINE AND PATRIOTIC FRONT, THEN US AND UK CALLS FOR PATIENCE AND RESTRAINT WILL FALL ON ABSOLUTELY DEAF EARS. IF WE ARE FORCED TO VETO AN OIL SANCTIONS RESOLUTION UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CREDIBILITY OF THE UK/US PROMISE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY MEASURES TO REMOVE SMITH WILL BE SEVERELY UNDERCUT AND WITH IT, OUR EFFECTIVENESS TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATING.

4. OUR STRATEGY FOR RHODESIA AT THE UN OBVIOUSLY MUST DEPEND ON EVENTS UNFOLDING IN AFRICA. CLEAR PROGRESS ON THE UK/US INITIATIVE WILL BUY US MORE TIME. STAGNATION OR WORSE PRESENTS THE NEAR CERTAINTY OF DONNEYBROOK SC SESSIONS ON RHODESIA AND A RESOLUTION ON OIL.
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5. IN ANY CASE, MISSION RECOMMENDS WE SET IN MOTION COORDINATED CONTINGENCY PLANNING WITH THE BRITISH FOR THE ROUGH COUNCIL SESSIONS WHICH COULD TAKE PLACE. WHILE WE WILL BE ABLE TO OFFER MORE THOUGHTS AS EVENTS HERE UNFOLD, WE BELIEVE THAT PART OF THAT CONTINGENCY PLANNING SHOULD INCLUDE A PRE-EMPTIVE UK/US RESOLUTION ON OIL, POSSIBLY STARTING WITH A GRADUATED APPROACH ALONG THE LINES OF THE SO-CALLED INDIAN RESOLUTION.
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